



The Role of the Community

The community plays a critical role in promoting school readiness. Families' access to information, health services, quality child care, and early learning, directly impacts school readiness and community economics.

Communities can support child development by encouraging parents to get assistance for children with disabilities and developmental delays and by encouraging parents to take their children for regular well-baby checks and to keep immunizations up to date. Communities can support literacy programs by encouraging parents to read to their children and help parents connect with voluntary parent education courses.

When communities invest in their youth with programs such as these, the whole community reaps economic benefits. Putting programs in place benefits the community by having a better educated population. With a better educated population, there are fewer people on public assistance, increased high school graduation rates, and a reduction in crime.¹

Potential Partners for Community Collaboration

United Way
Head Start/Early Head Start Agencies
Even Start Programs
Preschools and Child Care Facilities
Community Colleges
Healthy Families
Mental Health Center
YMCA/YWCA
Speech and Hearing Clinics

WIC
Religious Communities
Local Government
Parent Groups
Boys and Girls Club
Park and Recreations
First Steps
Service Clubs

¹ Calman, Leslie J., and Linda Tarr-Whelan. *Early Childhood Education for All: A Wise Investment*. New York. Legal Momentum, April 2005.

Community Programs

Listed below is sampling of programs that have been put into place by some Indiana communities through the collaboration of public and private agencies.

- United Way projects:
 - Success By Six
 - Born Learning
 - Early Readers' Club
 - Imagination Library
- Public Service announcements on the benefits of early learning, regular well health check-ups, basic nutrition.
- Festival of the Young Child or family health fairs with informational booths from social service agencies, health care, schools, childcare... set up in a carnival type atmosphere.
- Videos for mass distribution on the benefits of early learning.
- Family reading programs.
- Parents as Teacher programs.
- Parenting classes.
- Goody bags from the hospital containing information on available services, child development, immunization schedules, parenting brochures, importance of reading, etc.
- Transition bags containing information and activities for parent and child to do together to prepare for school.
- Play and Learn groups.
- Community calendars with pertinent information relating to families, child care, etc.

